

REGULAR MEETING

WEDNESDAY

7:00 P.M.

JULY 2, 2014

This Regular Meeting of Council was called to order on the above-stated date at the above-stated time after the Pledge of Allegiance and a Moment of Silence by Vice President of Council Dale McCall with the following Members of Council present:

RC-1 PRESENT: KEITH SOLES, JAMIE BREWSTER-FILOTEI, FAWN WALKER-MONTGOMERY, JAMES BARRY, DANIEL CARR, DALE McCALL

ABSENT: RICHARD DELLAPENNA

Gladys Hunt-Mason of the McKeesport Ministerium led the prayer.

Ms. Williams said Mr. Dellapenna is unable to be here this evening.

Also present were Mayor Michael Cherepko, City Administrator Matthew Gergely, City Solicitor J. Jason Elash and members of the Administration.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES:

MOTION: Mr. Carr moved, seconded by Mr. Soles, "To approve the minutes for the Regular Meeting of June 4, 2014."

RC-2 YEAS: SOLES, BREWSTER-FILOTEI, WALKER-MONTGOMERY, BARRY, CARR, McCALL..... 6

NAYS: NONE..... 0

COMMUNICATIONS:

- Received an invitation from the Allegheny League of Municipalities to attend their Annual Legislative Invitational and Dinner Meeting to be held on Monday, July 14, 2014.
- Received the Fire Report for the Month of June 2014 from Fire Chief Kevin Lust.

MAYOR'S REPORT:

- Mayor Cherepko said first and foremost he wants to start off with ... as they are very well aware from roll call, that the President of Council is not with them this evening. He said Mr. Dellapenna is spending time with his family, particularly his mother. He said they found a tumor on her brain and she had to have emergency surgery. He said one thing about Council is that they are family. He said as with any family, sometimes they bicker. He said he is asking that everyone please keep Rich, his mother and his family in their prayers and wish her a speedy recovery.
- Mayor Cherepko said he has a few things he would like to touch base on. He said he wants to update Council on one particular issue that they did not discuss last night. He said E-Collect, which is the firm Council brought in for the Business Privilege and Mercantile Tax collections, is now getting everything in place. He said the transition has not been an easy one because of the way the City operated ... he doesn't want to call it the Stone Age ... but the City has been operating the same way, pencil and paper, and everything was hand-written for the past several decades. He said E-Collect is now getting everything in place and he is happy to report that, without question, even though they are still in the very beginning stages, they have already come up with about \$70,000 that he can assure Council they would have

not collected. He said that was just by doing some basic audits that they started out with. He said they have found \$70,000 already and they have a tentative list of audits that they are in the process of doing. He said that list totals between \$700,000 and \$800,000. He said once again that is still not everything. He said that is before they start getting into a lot of the other things like landlords, other businesses and other audits that need to be done. He said he is happy to report that they are, without question, well worth the contract the City gave them. He said the contract is very minimal ... they pay them based on what they collect and they bring in about 2% on the collections on current billing and then it goes a little higher on delinquencies. He said the City was paying on delinquencies anyway. He said he is very pleased to update Council on that.

- Mayor Cherepko said obviously there are a lot of the events that have taken place in the City and will continue through the summer. He said it is an exciting time for the City of McKeesport and the residents here. He said most of the audience is well-aware of a lot of the activities that go on and he would just like to put out there and commend the Recreation Department for some of the events they have organized such as the Fishing Derby and the Bike Race that have already taken place. He said some that aren't even run by the City, such as the Soap Box Derby, He said keep in mind that these are events that bring outsiders into McKeesport. He said there are a lot of people from outside McKeesport who attend these events. He said last weekend they had a softball tournament ... and for those who don't know, Mr. Elash is very involved with fast-pitch girl's softball, along with Mr. Barry. He said this particular tournament was a tournament that Mr. Elash helped organize. He said there were 18 teams and he doesn't think there was one team all from McKeesport. He said they brought in lots of families who were putting up tents over by the band shell throughout the day and enjoyed Renzie Park. He said he thinks a lot of them, who may have had a

negative perception of McKeesport, many of them left the City with some good things to say. He said he does want to commend Jason for that tournament. He said the Parks Department came out Sunday and really helped to get those fields ready after all the rain they had Saturday night. He said it worked out very well ... another positive thing for the City.

- Mayor Cherepko said of course they have the Concerts in the Park up and running. He said the holiday weekend is coming and the City has a lot planned for this weekend and throughout the rest of the summer. He said before they know it ... his grandmother always told him that once the 4th of July is over, the summer goes downhill very quickly. He said International Village is coming up and the Committee, as Keith mentioned last evening, is up and working very hard to make International Village bigger and better each and every year. He said he commends Dan Carr, the Chairman, and Keith Soles and the rest of the committee for all of their efforts. He said he thinks sometimes, they tend to forget that this is all done on a volunteer basis. He said Gladys [Hunt-Mason] is sitting here and he knows she was up there last year and her and Keith had one of the worst jobs, sitting in the trailer and keeping track of all the money and everything else. He said it is not a fun job to sit in that trailer all evening and count money. He said he appreciates them and all the volunteers who help out. He said it is a great event because they do have all the churches come together and they are obviously looking forward to yet another great year.
- Mayor Cherepko said on the agenda tonight is an ongoing issue that they have been faced with in this City. He said it is definitely no secret to the public, and that is the blighted structures in the City. He said this particular contract that they have, he does want to remind them that they have another contract that they approved two years ago through the efforts of this Administration through CITF money. He

said at first the City was denied that money for demolition because they don't do demolition projects with CITF money. He said obviously the City did not take "no" for an answer and turned it into a revitalization project around the Twin Rivers Primary and Intermediate School along with the Library and Churches up there. He said the Little Theater is up there and the Reservoir site, a lot of good things. He said that is an area that they are truly focused on revitalizing and they truly believe that the area is going to be a starting point for moving straight up and continuing right up through the Seventh Ward. He said as they continue to work on that, they will utilize all of their resources, including their own demolition, which will begin towards the end of summer around Labor Day. He said as things slow down, the City will start some of the in-house demolition. He said of course their summer crews are out there now working hard. He said they are cleaning up as many lots as they can so the residents who do live next to these structures, can at least maybe not have the weeds so high. He said as they continue to use all of their resources and all of the strategies, this contract this evening was one more for the outside of the City, more of the fringes of the City ... the ones that tend to ... when it comes to blight and because they don't have as much blight, tend to sometimes seem to get neglected. He said it is important that they continue to preserve those neighborhoods as well. He said obviously on this list, for those who can look, they have seven houses from the Grandview area which is a very large area. He said they have three or four from Fawcett Plan. He said there are one or two from Highland Grove ... he is just rattling these off from the top of his head. He said they have one over next to Sarah and Anderson Street by Auberle. He said they have one in Peterson Plan. He said as they go through the whole strategic plan ... along with some still in the lower Wards on Versailles Avenue. He said as they continue to move forward, it is important to let the public know that nothing would make them happier than to tear down every house. He said he doesn't think there is

one person sitting up here along with this Administration that doesn't want to see all the blight go tomorrow, but unfortunately it costs money. He said with that, he doesn't want anyone to forget that they are working diligently to try to continue to move forward on getting rid of these blighted structures. He said that is the foundation, between the blight and public safety, it is the foundation of seeing their great City flourish once again. He said they will come ... unfortunately it has taken decades to go downhill since the crash of the Steel Industry and they are not going to rebuild it overnight either. He said they are working on that and he is excited about this contract that is on the Agenda for Council this evening. He said as he mentioned the holiday, he truly wants to take this opportunity to wish everyone a safe and happy holiday over the weekend and that concludes his report.

- Ms. Walker-Montgomery said she has a question. She said when the Mayor said the \$70,000, does that automatically go to the operating budget or does that go to next year's budget. She said where does that go.
- Mayor Cherepko said that goes into collections in the General Fund.
- Ms. Walker-Montgomery said it goes into the General Fund.
- Mayor Cherepko said keep in mind that all of their revenues and expenditures are estimates. He said so when they exceed those estimations that just helps the City. He said that is the only area where they may have exceeded expenditures such as the brutal winter they had and things like that. He said they didn't have that much money in the budget for the amount of salt they purchased. He said that is one of the reasons they brought these people in and presented them to Council. He said they just had a meeting earlier today and are talking to a lot of the ladies' at City Hall and

telling them that they are really going to need them. He said once again, the ladies' go above and beyond their duties. He said it is easy for them to sit back and say that is not their job, but when they start really trying to go out and think of every dollar they can bring in, the ladies all pull together. He said all of them down there at City Hall will work to get delinquency notices out and whatever it takes. He said they will continue to do that throughout the rest of the year rather than waiting until November and December. He said they are really trying to stay ahead of everything.

CITIZENS IN THE AUDIENCE:

- **GLADYS HUNT-MASON and MARIANNE MACBETH, McKEESPORT REGIONAL HISTORY & HERITAGE CENTER, McKEESPORT, PA.** Ms. Hunt-Mason said unfortunately they will have this traveling road show almost every Council meeting.
 - Ms. Macbeth said first of all, she apologizes for their backs to the audience but she has never done this before and she doesn't know what else to do. She said she is Ms. Hunt-Mason's faithful companion, sidekick or whatever. She said they are here tonight to represent the McKeesport Regional History & Heritage Center. She said leaping from the good news that the Mayor disseminated, they wanted to tell Council a little bit about their facility. She said she doesn't know how many of them have ever visited them out in Renze Park, but if they haven't, she is going to make an offer that she has not mentioned to the Director. She said if any or all or one of them would like to come out to the Center and take a tour of everything they have about McKeesport at its peak, from the time of Queen Aliquippa on, Michelle would be glad to give them a

guided tour, or if Michelle is not available, she would.

- Ms. Hunt-Mason said she will also.
- Ms. Macbeth said what she would like to tell them about is that they are open on Tuesday, Wednesday and Thursday from 9:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. and every Saturday from 9:00 a.m. to 3:00 p.m. She said this summer they are trying to be open on a few Sundays as well. She said they take part in absolutely everything that McKeesport does in addition to which, they offer some programs. She said they have an extremely exciting program coming up on July 19. She said Helen Richey is one of the luminaries of McKeesport. She said what they have going on is a speaker, Andrea Niapas. She said she hopes she is not mispronouncing her name. She said Ms. Niapas is going to join the Heritage Center to share stories from research she has done on her new book called "Fatal Friendship." She said this book deals with the death of Helen Richey and the strange disappearance of Amelia Earheart. She said Helen Richey was convinced that Amelia's mysterious disappearance had sinister undertones and wanted secret activities surrounding the fatal flight brought to light. She said friends warned Helen that she was asking too many questions and on January 7, 1947, Helen died in her New York City apartment. She said Helen's death was ruled a suicide but it is impossible to reject the possibility of a different cause. She said this book is a historical mystery based on years of investigative research. She said this program is free. She said they serve cookies and punch as well. She said the Heritage Center is like the jewel of McKeesport. She said but it is a well-kept secret. She said if they have not been there, y'all come on down.
- Mr. Gergely said is that event on Saturday.

- Ms. Macbeth said that event on Saturday will be at 2:00 p.m.
- Mr. McCall said on July 19.
- Ms. Hunt-Mason said since Council is not in session in August, she will tell them what they are doing in August. She said there is an awesome part of this series that they are doing in the summer. She said the author is David Stokes. She said this will be on Saturday, August 23. She said his book is "Capital Limited." She said it is fiction but is based on a true story. She said long before they ran against each other for the presidency in 1960, John F. Kennedy and Richard Nixon faced off here in McKeesport in April 1947 to debate the merits of the brand new Taft-Hartley Labor Law. She said as fate would have it, after that debate, they found themselves sharing a pullman compartment on a train called the Capital Limited, the pride of the B&O Line, for an overnight trip back to Washington. She said they stayed awake all night talking about their lives, their hopes, and visions for a better world. She said in "Capital Limited," David Stokes imagined how the conversation might have progressed on that long-ago night. She said the book is based on extensive research and complete with a lengthy, and unusual for a novel, bibliography. She said "Capital Limited" is their chance to eavesdrop as two men who would one day sit in the Oval Office had an animated conversation about history, world leaders, and issues they would face as leaders of the Free World. She said this in on August 23. She said she has to bring this up. She said last Saturday, they went to the Soldiers' and Sailors' Hall for an extensive tour there. She said it was amazing the stuff that they knew about McKeesport back in the day and they were able to look for these individuals in the different displays. She said their names were on ... it was great.

She said the man who was showing them around was a little amazed that they knew so much. She said they were ... this is history, this is our heritage and they should be proud of what has gone on in this community. She said this is what they are trying to preserve. She said this is a great thing. She said, as she said before, the last month ... and Ms. Macbeth said, if they step in the doors, she can guarantee them that if they let them lead them around, they will be back again and again. She said don't forget in August they will have a booth at the International Village.

- Ms. Macbeth said don't worry, they are not cooking.
- Ms. Hunt-Mason said the booth will be informational.
- Mr. McCall said thank you ladies.
- Ms. Macbeth said one other thing. She said she has to tell them this. She said one of the things they found out when they did their massive Civil War display with Heinz History Center was ... do they all know that the four men who carried President Lincoln from Ford's Theater across the street to where he died, were from McKeesport.
- Mr. McCall said he knew that.
- Ms. Macbeth said did he know that. She said well come on up and they will show him other really nifty things. She said thank you very much.

- **DARLENE ALLEN, 1712 FLAGLER STREET, McKEESPORT, PA 15132.** Ms. Allen said here she is once again. She said but this time why she is here is to thank them all for the matter of the abandoned house next door. She said Keith came out first, early in the morning and she was really surprised, pleasantly surprised. She said then she had to go for a little R & R. She said then she heard

that the Mayor and four other people were there. She said the neighbors were very happy as well that they all came and at least observed what was going on. She said they really do appreciate that, and she personally thanks them. She said she also wanted to thank Ms. Walker-Montgomery too because she has helped her a lot. She said Ms. Walker-Montgomery is the one who encouraged her to come out to check Council out and see what they were doing. She said Ms. Brewster-Filotei went to the Racko's game. She said she was also there with her friend, Terry.

- Ms. Brewster-Filotei said that is where Ms. Allen was from.
- Ms. Allen said she is proud to say that her granddaughter's cousin was the winner of the Racko Tournament and she won about 10 – 12 board games. She said they were very nice there. She said she is also happy to say thank you so much for the things that they do for all of the children here. She said the children have so many opportunities to have a good summer as well as the older people. She said thank you and have a good holiday.

TABLED BILLS:

Mr. McCall said he needs a motion to remove Bill #45 from the Table.

MOTION: **Mr. Carr moved, seconded by Mr. Barry, "To remove Bill #45 from the Table."**

RC-3	YEAS:	SOLES, BREWSTER-FILOTEI, WALKER-MONTGOMERY, BARRY, CARR, McCALL.....	6
	NAYS:	NONE.....	0

RESOLUTION #2014-26 – BILL #45: A RESOLUTION OF THE CITY OF McKEESPORT, ALLEGHENY COUNTY, PENNSYLVANIA, AUTHORIZING THE PROPER CITY OFFICIALS TO EXECUTE ALL DOCUMENTS APPROVED BY THE SOLICITOR WITH FREEDOM SYSTEMS CORPORATION AND VISION FINANCIAL GROUP, INC. TO PURCHASE NEW MUNICIPAL MANAGEMENT SOFTWARE.

MOTION: **Mr. Carr moved, seconded by Mr. Barry, "To adopt Bill #45."**

COMMENTS:

- Mr. Gergely said this is the contract for the software the City will use for the City's accounting. He said the integrated system is the one they have chosen to run City Hall now. He said they have not been using much technology prior to this. He said this will incorporate all offices of City Hall and they will all be connected. He said it will be used not just for accounting but to track all of the City's data technologically now.
- Mayor Cherepko said in a nutshell for the public, this software will really help run the City more efficiently. He said it will include the finance end of it, ordinance violations, houses, landlords, everything. He said the whole idea is for them to put in an address and pull up everything about that house, whether it is finances, ordinance violations, times they were cited, anything that can will be pulled up. He said he wants to commend Matt, especially in front of the public, because he spent an unbelievable amount of time between the two companies that they were looking at. He said he definitely believes wholeheartedly in his decision. He said he told Matt from the beginning that it was his decision. He said Matt is the one who will deal with it more on a regular basis with the employees than he would. He said he will use it just as a resource for his office. He said he definitely thinks that Matt made the right decision. He said he

applauds Matt for the amount of time he has put in to make the decision.

RC-4 YEAS: SOLES, BREWSTER-FILOTEI, WALKER-MONTGOMERY, BARRY, CARR, McCALL..... 6
 NAYS: NONE..... 0

NEW BUSINESS:

RESOLUTION #2014-27 – BILL #49: A RESOLUTION OF THE CITY OF McKEESPORT, ALLEGHENY COUNTY, PENNSYLVANIA, RECOGNIZING THE REGIONAL CHAMBER ALLIANCE FOUNDATION AS A CIVIC AND/OR SERVICE ASSOCIATION UNDER THE LOCAL OPTIONS SMALL GAMES OF CHANCE ACT, AS AMENDED.

MOTION: Ms. Walker-Montgomery moved, seconded by Ms. Brewster-Filotei, "To adopt Bill #49."

RC-5 YEAS: SOLES, BREWSTER-FILOTEI, WALKER-MONTGOMERY, BARRY, CARR, McCALL..... 6
 NAYS: NONE..... 0

RESOLUTION #2014-28 – BILL #50: A RESOLUTION OF THE CITY OF McKEESPORT, ALLEGHENY COUNTY, PENNSYLVANIA, RECOGNIZING TWIN RIVERS COUNCIL OF GOVERNMENTS AS A CIVIC AND/OR SERVICE ASSOCIATION UNDER THE LOCAL OPTIONS SMALL GAMES OF CHANCE ACT, AS AMENDED.

MOTION: Mr. Soles moved, seconded by Ms. Brewster-Filotei, "To adopt Bill #50."

RC-6 YEAS: SOLES, BREWSTER-FILOTEI, WALKER-MONTGOMERY, BARRY, CARR, McCALL..... 6

NAYS: NONE..... 0

RESOLUTION #2014-29 – BILL #51: A RESOLUTION OF THE CITY OF McKEESPORT, ALLEGHENY COUNTY, PENNSYLVANIA, AUTHORIZING THE PROPER CITY OFFICERS TO ENTER INTO AN AGREEMENT WITH STASH TRUCKING FOR 2014 DEMOLITION PROJECT IN THE AMOUNT OF \$107,200.00.

MOTION: Ms. Brewster-Filotei moved, seconded by Ms. Walker-Montgomery, "To adopt Bill #51."

RC-7 YEAS: SOLES, BREWSTER-FILOTEI, WALKER-MONTGOMERY, BARRY, CARR, McCALL..... 6

NAYS: NONE..... 0

CONTROLLER'S REPORT:

City Controller Harry Walsh said before he asks for the approval of bills, he knows that the Mayor, the Administration and Councilman Dan Carr are aware of this. He said last week he got a call from the Business Manager of Corpus Christi. He said the Diocese of Pittsburgh approved the donation of all the property from the Holy Trinity Church, which includes 5 lots, to the Redevelopment Authority. He said all they have to do is pay for the paperwork and the transfer of the deeds. He said if it wasn't for Father Steve Kresak, who was the pastor, this would not have happened. He said Father Kresak assured him, and they have been working on this since last year. He said even though Father Kresak is being transferred, Father said he would make sure that this transfer came to fruition. He said he thinks the intent after talking to Dan Carr is that they will eventually vacate the street and to build a ramp from where they store the boats to the second floor of the Palisades and use that as parking for the Palisades. He said he gave this to Mr. Elash and the

Redevelopment's Solicitor George Gobel is supposedly going to contact the diocese to get the work done. He said then the Redevelopment Authority will own those five lots.

- Mr. Elash said Mr. Gobel has already ordered the information for those lots.
- Mr. Walsh said that is good. He said after this is completed, they will send a letter of thanks to Father Kresak.
- Mayor Cherepko said without question. He said this particular area they are talking about is where the old church is on Market between 8th Street and 9th Street. He said for those who attend meetings regularly, he is sure they have heard him on more than one occasion say that the particular area down there is a great area for potential development. He said it is a block from the Marina and the Palisades. He said for the City to get access to five lots and to have the Redevelopment Authority own them is great. He said for those who don't understand, the Redevelopment Authority is an entity under the City and takes care of all real estate. He said what that means is that they are at liberty to sell those lots whenever they so choose and no one will have to go through all the bureaucratic red tape that would typically be required for sheriff's sale or vacant property review. He said to get these lots in hand can be a tremendous benefit for development and as he also mentioned, and it is no secret, that Dan and he have a vision for the Palisades. He said Dan is chairman of the McKees Point Commission down there. He said what they have done ... if they have not been to the Palisades lately, please stop by. He said the renovations are unbelievable. He said it is truly a very nice facility. He said they are going to continue to enhance that facility and market it for events. He said once again, not just to the residents of McKeesport, but to people outside the City of McKeesport, so they can have a true destination point. He said if there is anything at all that he can think of lacking at the Palisades right now, it

is parking. He said he and Dan have talked numerous times and that is exactly how Dan feels. He said Dan is right about that. He said if you look at all the events, it would be nice ... instead of storing all the boats where they do now, to have that as a parking lot connected to the Palisades and maybe even have a ramp from there. He said having these other properties would have potential, not only for the City to build and revise but also to market to other people. He said he is not saying anything concrete is coming in right now but they have had discussions with people that want to build up around the Palisades. He said whether it is boat accessories, boat rentals, restaurants, or there are even talks of small hotels. He said they have two separate entities that have expressed some interest. He said he doesn't want anyone leaving tonight and saying the Mayor told them there is a hotel coming. He said that is not the case. He said there have been talks about potential, vision and hope and it is more than just random hope. He said there are some conversations taking place. He said he does want to applaud Dan for everything he has done down at the Palisades to truly make that an event center. He said for those who have not been down there, please stop by ... whether it is when one of the bands are playing or whatever it may be. He said try to make it down there. He said everytime he is there, he can't tell them how many people come up and say wow does this look good. He said especially the people who are in there for the first time. He said next Friday they will be having a lot of McKeesport residents there who have not been there. He said they should get a nice crowd for the McKeesport Past and Present for their dinner at the Palisades on July 10th. He said he is anxious to hear their input too. He said that will be exciting for them. He said those are McKeesport residents and also former McKeesporters who come into town for that. He said they are excited to welcome them.

- Mr. Carr said they also have the Delphonics coming this Saturday which is a National act. He said they have been

bringing national acts into McKeesport. He said it is another one of those jewels that seems to be hidden. He said they are making the effort to change that.

- Mr. Walsh said the bills amounted to \$36,967.58. He said they are in order and he would like to ask for Council's approval of those bills.

MOTION: **Ms. Walker-Montgomery moved, seconded by Ms. Brewster-Filotei, "To approve payment of the bills in the amount of \$36,967.58."**

RC-8 YEAS: SOLES, BREWSTER-FILOTEI, WALKER-MONTGOMERY, BARRY, CARR, McCALL..... 6

 NAYS: NONE..... 0

ADJOURNMENT:

Vice President of Council Dale McCall adjourned the meeting at 7:35 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Patricia A. Williams
City Clerk and Clerk of Council

APPROVED:

Richard Dellapenna
President of Council

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